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ABSTRACT

Discussed are aspects of sex-role development in Japanese adolescents and some related problems, such as self-concept and socialization processes. Various studies on Japanese adolescents have revealed substantial sex differences in self-esteem, which is significantly low in girls. In addition to differences in self-esteem, greater discrepancy between females' sex-role, self-concept, and perceived social sex-role norms are repeatedly documented in several studies using different measures. Most studies on child-rearing patterns indicate that parental attitudes and behavior toward their child differ according to the sex of the child; girls are frequently trained to conform with traditional sex role expectations. Sex-differentiated treatment involves parental aspiration for education, expectation toward child's future life, assignment of housework, and 'juku' schooling for sons and daughters. Additional studies indicate that parents' behavior is not necessarily consistent with their opinions on sex-role, and children's attitude toward parents' sex-differentiated behavior differs considerably between boys and girls. Among other findings, it is noted that educational institutions and social settings also play important roles in exacting adjustment to traditional sex-role stereotypes. Textbooks, curricula, and other aspects of elementary and secondary education have recently been criticized for sex bias, a phenomenon which is found also in higher education. (RH)

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Issues on Self-Concept and Sex-Role Development in Japan

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Keiko Kashiwagi

Sex-role development is obviously one of the essential problems to be resolved to understand human development from a broad socio-cultural point of view. The circumstances surrounding sex-role development have been changing and are varied these days in many respect: in personal values, social norms, family structure, education, labour market and several demographic variables such as birth rate, life span and so on. All of these socio-cultural factors have had massive influences upon sex-role development which eventually determines personality and adjustment.

In particular, sex-role development during adolescence which reflects socialising processes in the family and school will deeply influence the youngster's self-concept and adjustment, and may determine the future course of his/her life.

This paper deals with sex-role development in Japanese adolescents and some related problems such as self-concept and socialisation processes. Recent trends in this field of researches will be reviewed and examined partly from a cross-cultural point of view and some problems as well.

SELF-CONCEPT IN JAPANESE ADOLESCENTS

Self-concept has been one of the central topics in psychology of adolescence ever since it was introduced in Japan. Owing to many research and reports published so far, some characteristics of development of self-concept and self-esteem have gradually been unveiled. One of them is a consistent emergency of sex difference in self-concept observed across many development researches.

Yamamoto *et al.* (1982) reported in their study of college students that self evaluation by male subjects was significantly more positive than that of female subjects in various aspects of personality (Table 1). Similar tendencies are also seen in several cross-sectional data (Murase, 1973; Kato, 1977; Miyazawa, 1978; and Kajita, 1980). Most of these studies revealed striking sex differences, with male subjects having higher self-acceptance and females with lower self-evaluation. Significantly lower self-ratings in female subjects have been pointed out in various areas such as positive attitudes toward life and ability, confidence and satisfaction with their own personality. Moreover, negative self evaluations exist in females all through their lives, from adolescence to old age. (Shimonaka *et al.* 1976).

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Eleven Dimensions for Boys and Girls

Dimensions	Boys	Girls	P
Sociability	3.00 (1.04)	3.22 (1.08)	< .01
Athletic Skills	3.04 (1.11)	2.60 (1.10)	< .01
Intelligence	2.99 (0.92)	2.56 (0.89)	< .01
Kindness and Tenderness	3.49 (0.86)	3.43 (0.80)	
Sexuality	2.19 (0.96)	2.58 (0.94)	< .01
Looks	2.76 (0.95)	2.58 (0.94)	< .05
Way of Living	3.21 (1.06)	2.84 (1.08)	< .01
Economic Capacity	2.54 (0.93)	2.70 (1.00)	< .05
Hobby and Special Ability	3.30 (1.11)	3.02 (1.19)	< .01
Earnestness	3.44 (0.82)	3.41 (0.86)	
Popularity of Schools	3.12 (1.08)	3.37 (1.10)	< .01

Source. M. Yamamoto *et al.*, 1982.

Identity confusion based on Erikson's theory is another characteristics to be considered in self-concept. It also exists more predominantly among female adolescents. In addition, there is a close relationship between identity confusion and the large disparity in real self and ideal self of female subjects (Takeuchi, 1981 Matsuda, *et al.*, 1982).

In brief, most research conducted so far almost unequivocally provide evidences of sex differences in self-concept, revealing that females have low self-acceptance, negative self-evaluations and negative feelings toward self. This seems to be one of the characteristics peculiar to Japanese adolescents because Maccoby and Jackline (1974) presented different data. They reported that out of 39 studies on self-concept at various age levels reviewed, 24 of them showed no sex differences, only 6 reported higher self-esteem among boys, and 9 documented higher self-esteem among girls. This picture is quite different from the consistent

trend of lower self-evaluations among Japanese females. How can this difference be explained? The lower self-esteem of Japanese females may be closely related to difficulties in their adjustment to the sex role which is socially and traditionally defined more rigidly than in the United States of America. A few female adolescents are reluctant to accept the social norms for women but they eventually meet conflicts in integrating their own conceptions of sex role with social sex-role norms. Thus, lower self-evaluations and identity confusion peculiar to Japanese female adolescents seem to be closely related with social norms on sex-role in Japan.

SEX-ROLE DEVELOPMENT IN JAPANESE ADOLESCENTS

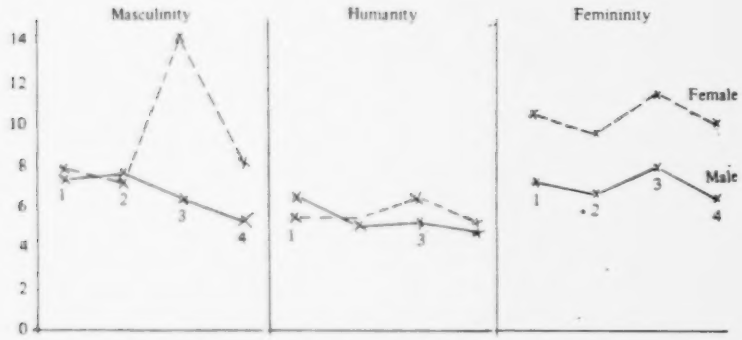
Acquisition of the sex role from early childhood through adolescence has been investigated in various aspects. Cognitive aspects of sex role development of Japanese adolescents have received particular attention and several consistent results have so far been obtained. Girl's acquisition of sex roles is considered to be an important problem related to developmental tasks and adjustment in adolescents.

Social sex roles of males and females are differently conceptualised along two opposite dimensions: one is the masculine dimension characterised by activity, independence and dominance for males, and the other is the feminine dimension characterised by elegance, loveliness and calmness for females (Kashiwagi, 1967, 1972, 1974). In addition to these male and female dimensions, a humanity dimension consisting of brightness, warmth and broad-mindedness is regarded as equally important traits for both sexes (Ito, 1978) (see Table 2).

Table 2
List of Items in M-H-F Scale

Masculinity	Humanity	Femininity
Ambitious	Tolerant	Cute
Stout (strong)	Broad-minded	Elegant
Bold	Bright	Sexy
Leadership	Cheerful	Devoted
Confident	Warm	Charming
Dependable	Sincere	Speaks politely
Active	Healthy	Delicate
Self-assertive	Candid	Submissive
Strong-willed	One's own way of living	Calm
Quick in decision	Broadview	Primp

Source. Y. Ito, 1978.



Source. Y. Ito and K. Akitsu, 1980.

Notes. 1 = Junior; 2 = Junior High; 3 = College and 4 = Adult.

Figure 1: Discrepancy Between Conceptions of Sex-Role and Perceived Social Sex-Role Norms in Four Age-Groups

In the conceptualisation of the sex roles, sex differences have been identified by several researches. Male subjects tend to regard males and females on a nearly bipolar basis while female subjects are likely to minimise the difference between the role of the two sexes..

Sex differences are more prominent in the evaluation of what is desirable for their own sex than in the evaluation of existing social sex roles. In male subjects, masculine and feminine dimensions are rated differently and desirabilities for themselves on these two dimensions are clearly discriminated. Compared to male subjects, female subjects' conceptions of their own sex-role are different from their evaluation of social female role. They rate M traits higher and F traits lower on desirable female role than their rating on existing social sex-roles (Ito, 1978 and 1981). Accordingly, larger discrepancies between conceptions of their own individual sex-role and perceptions of social sex-role exist in female subjects (Kashiwagi, 1974; Ito, 1980a; Ito and Akitsu, 1983) (see Fig. 1).

The largest discrepancies between their own conceptions of sex role and their perceptions of social sex-role are evident at the college level although discrepancies are consistantly larger in female subjects through all age levels (Inagaki, 1969; and Kashiwagi, 1974). The discrepancies tend to decrease in adulthood and the conception of sex role gradually changed

from the extremely unconventional pattern of college student towards a moderate pattern of traditional sex-role stereotypes (Inagaki, 1969). Cross-national comparisons on sex-role development are rare. However, discrepancies in conceptions of sex role between Japanese and American female adolescents have been pointed out (Inagaki, 1967).

SELF-CONCEPT AND SEX-ROLE DEVELOPMENT

These evidences on sex-role development suggest that Japanese female adolescents have considerable conflicts in conceptualising and accepting their own sex role and this may eventually cause some difficulties in personality development and adjustment in female.

In fact, a cross-national survey (Ministry of Education, 1975) unveiled a lower degree of acceptance of their own sex in Japanese females; they are more reluctant to be women compared to the females in other Western countries (Table 3). This suggests that the situations are apt to lead Japanese female adolescents to a lack of confidence in themselves and then to some confusion in their identities. Accumulated evidences seem to support this hypothesis.

Table 3
Response in Women to Question 'Which Do You Wish to Be Born Next Time, a Man or a Woman? in Percentages

	US	France	Sweden	Japan
To be a man	10.5	25.8	4.5	27
To be a woman	78.5	57.0	89.1	50
Ambiguous	11.0	17.2	2.7	23

Source. Ministry of Education, 1975.

Disparity of two self-concepts (real and ideal) is examined in relation to acceptance of individual sex role by several studies. Significant D-scores (disparity between real and ideal self-concepts) are found in the female groups showing a negative and sometimes rejective attitude towards their own sex (Takahashi, 1975). Significant positive correlations between identity confusion and D-scores are also observed with female adolescents. Lower self-esteem which includes lack of confidence, inferiority complex, passive and inactive attitudes toward their future life has been suggested to be a main factor which hampers the establishment of stable self-identity. In addition, girls with high femininity scores as measured by a revised version of MMPI tended to accept the traditional female role and has less conflict with social sex-role norms (Ito, 1980a). These data show that acceptance of individual sex role is one of the critical determinants of self-concept in Japanese female adolescents.

One more factor has certainly an adverse effect on the self-esteem of females. There is a general trend in Japanese society for the traits traditionally attributed to the female role to be less valued than those attributed to the traditional male role. The traits on the female dimension are evaluated distinctly lower by Japanese people of both sexes (Ito, 1980a) (see Table 4).

Table 4
Social Evaluation on Three Sex-Role Dimensions: Masculinity, Humanity and Femininity.

Sex	Masculinity	Humanity	Femininity
Male	33.64[1]	36.49	19.86
	(4.89)[2]	(3.44)	(4.37)
Female	32.15	36.92	20.90
	(5.32)	(3.50)	(4.77)

Notes. [1] Mean and [2] standard deviation.
Source. Y. Ito., 1978.

According to Spence *et al.*, high self-ratings on masculinity and femininity are significantly related to self-esteem for both men and women. Consistent sex differences in self-esteem itself are not evident in their data (Table 5). Rather, high self-esteem is observed in women. The strong associations of both masculinity and femininity with self-esteem in US (correlations of M and F with self-esteem are sufficiently high with values ranging from .30 to .83) suggest that these two factors (M and F) may function to determine an individual's self-esteem.

Table 5
Mean Self-Esteem in Four Groups Differing in Masculinity and Femininity

	1 Low M Low F	2 Low M High F	3 High M Low F	4 High M High M
Men	66.82	74.55	87.02	93.73
N	(72)	(30)	(64)	(68)
Women	69.66	75.41	92.17	98.73
N	(56)	(104)	(30)	(80)

Source. J.T. Spence *et. al.*, 1975.

Relevant data on Japanese samples comparable with Spence's findings are not available. However, somewhat different pictures are suggested by Ito's previous findings. Female subjects with high score on F scale of MMPI tend to evaluate F dimension highly on female role and they are also more likely to accept their sex role. (It may be speculated that this also leads to high self-esteem). In contrast, the subjects with low F scores and high M scores tend to evaluate the M dimension highly on female role and are reluctant to accept their own female role.

Various studies on Japanese adolescents so far described have revealed outstanding sex differences in self-esteem which is significantly low in girls. In addition to low self-esteem, greater discrepancy between their own sex-role concept and perceived social sex-role norms in female are repeatedly documented by various researchers using different measures.

Further examinations are needed to clarify the mechanisms underlying the cognitive development of sex role and its relationship to the self-esteem of Japanese adolescents. In addition to the cognitive domain, behavioural domains related to sex role in terms of masculinity and femininity as duality are to be another target for further examination. Such an approach will give us a better understanding of the characteristics and problems of sex role socialisation processes and of self-concept in adolescents living in a changing society. Studies along this line are worthy of cross-cultural research in order to understand personality development and adjustment from a broad socio-cultural perspective.

SEX-ROLE SOCIALISATION PROCESSES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Various phases of sex-role socialisation exist in the home, school and the social settings, and they all play an important role, both explicitly and implicitly, in creating various sex differences among Japanese people. Most of the studies on child-rearing patterns have provided the data that parental attitudes and behaviour towards their child differ according to the sex of the child; the girl is frequently trained to conform with the traditional sex role of females.

The aspects of parental sex-differentiated treatment shown in the reports of recent surveys are: parental aspiration for education, expectation towards child's future life, assignment of housework, and '*juku*' schooling for sons and daughters (Economic Planning Agency, 1978; Ministry of Education, 1975, 1983; and Prime Minister's Office, 1979, 1980). More detailed examinations on parental, sex-differentiated disciplines reveal somewhat complicated and confused pictures: according to the studies which have been conducted, (Kashiwagi, 1975 and Kashiwagi *et al.*, 1976), sex-differenciated disciplines are present in nearly 80% of Japanese homes, girls being expected to conform with the traditional sex role (Table 6). However, parental, sex-differentiated discipline is not necessarily consistent with their concepts (opinions) on sex-role; a con-

siderable amount of incongruity between parental actual behaviours and their opinions is observed in nearly 50% of the parents. For instance, many good mothers who speak against traditional sex-role stereotype often actually train their children differentially in line with the conventional sex role concept. Such incongruity between opinions and behaviours is more frequently found among the mothers with older children (adolescents) than among the mothers with young children, and is more prevalent among the mothers with girls than among the mothers with boys.

Table 6
Distribution of Mothers According to Types of Sex-Differentiated Discipline at Three Age Levels

Types of Mothers	Age of Children		
	Ten	Twelve	Fourteen
Mothers who train their children differently according to their sexes.	37*	30	35
Mothers who give sex-differentiated training only to sons.	19	17	8
Mothers who give sex-differentiated training only to daughters.	29	27	33
Mothers who train their sons and daughters equally without any sex-differentiated training	15	26	23

*Source. K. Kashiwagi, 1976.
Note. Fitures are given in percentages.

On the other hand, children's attitude towards such sex-differentiated discipline is considerably different between boys and girls (Table 7). Boys at high school and college levels show more positive opinion of the parental discipline but girls of both age levels are resistant to the sex-typed training and show rather negative attitudes toward parental discipline.

In addition to the parental discipline at home from birth to adolescence, educational institutions and social setting also play important roles as socialising agents in making the children adjust themselves to the traditional sex-role stereotypes. Textbooks, curricula and other aspects of elementary and secondary education have recently been criticised for being biased on this point (Sato, 1977). For instance, only girls are

requested to learn homemaking as a compulsory subject. This is only one of the explicit examples of children being discriminated in the direction of sex-role differentiation.

Table 7
Attitudes Toward Parental Sex-Differentiated Discipline in Two Age Levels

Sex	Age Level	
	High School	College
Male	26.1[1] (19.1)[2]	26.0 (17.8)
Female	17.2 (11.6)	18.5 (15.3)

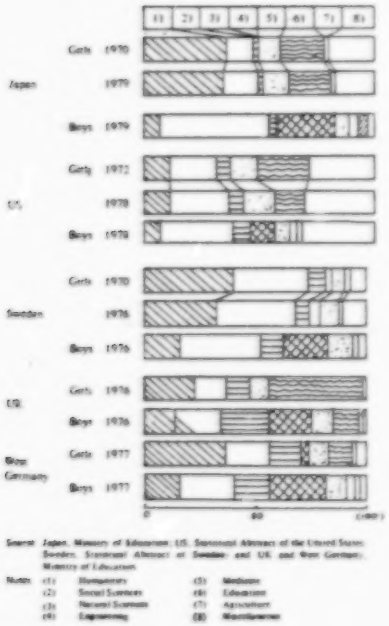
Source. K. Kashiwagi, 1975.

Notes. [1] Means (the higher the score, the more positive and permissive are the attitudes toward parental discipline). [2] Standard deviation.

As a consequence of parental expectations and training based on the child's sex, extremely biased distribution of boys and girls is found in courses taken in the universities. In the distribution, Japanese students are strikingly different from those in other countries. This trend has hardly changed and has almost been constant for the last decade (Ministry of Education, 1980) (see Fig. 2).

As seen clearly in the divergent distribution of courses according to sex, sex-differentiated training has a massive effect upon various aspects of child development. The influences of sex-typed socialisation processes have been increasingly taken up by developmental psychologists and a detailed investigation has been carried out by several researchers (Ito, 1980; Kashiwagi, *et al.*, 1976; and Soeda and Kashiwagi, 1981). Values, interests, life styles, academic achievement and career patterns have been the main targets for analysis in connection with sex-typed training by parents.

The research reveals a somewhat complicated picture concerning the impact of parental sex-differentiated discipline upon sex-typing in children (Table 8). Sex-differentially trained boys showed more sex-typed behaviour at all age levels. This suggests that parental training functions as the direct reinforcement for boy's behavioural development. In girls, however, such direct impact was detectable only at 10 or 12 years' age levels, and the reverse relationship of parental discipline and sex-typing is identified at 14 years' age level. This implies negative influences of parental sex-typed training upon female adolescents.



Source: Japan, Ministry of Education; US, Statistical Abstract of the United States; Sweden, Statistisk Arbetsart or Sweden; and UK and West Germany, Ministry of Education.

Notes: (1) Humanities (5) Medicine
(2) Social Sciences (6) Education
(3) Natural Sciences (7) Agriculture
(4) Engineering (8) Miscellaneous

Figure 2
Distribution of Students in University Courses
(Comparison of Five Countries)

Table 8
Sex-Typing in Children and Mother's Sex-Differentiated Discipline

Maternal Discipline	Sex					
	Boy			Girl		
	Age in Years					
	10	12	14	10	12	14
Sex-Differentiated	3.60	2.27	4.83	−2.00	−3.07	−2.44
Equally-Trained	3.56	2.27	3.14	−1.00	−2.50	−2.13

Source. K. Kashiwagi, 1976.

Notes. Scores of sex-typed behaviour range from 0 to 12 for boys and from 0 to 14 for girls. Higher absolute score means more sex-typed behaviour for each sex.

According to Honor (1972), fear of success is one of the marked characteristics related to sex-typing in females. Several researches reveal some sex differences concerning fear of success in Japanese adolescents. It is found at all age levels but substantial sex differences are documented at high-school student level which tends to become more and more striking. (Saito *et al.*, 1981). In addition, qualitative differences are marked between males and females in the way how one withdraws from achieving success (Okazaki, 1977). Based on content analysis of verbal responses, two types of motives are identified; one is withdrawal (avoidance) from success because of negative evaluation of success itself, and the other is fear of success due to the expectations that success may cause negative social criticisms for inappropriate female role. The former, withdrawal from success, is found in both sexes but the latter, fear of success, is present only among female subjects.

As for some influences of sex-differentiated discipline upon cognitive development, a preliminary analysis of the data on material influences upon child's cognitive outcomes collected in Japan and US presents interesting features of sex differences. Since the study is not primarily concerned with sex differences, the sample size of each sex is not enough to make a definite conclusion. In spite of the limitation, there are a few cognitive performance measures showing significant sex differences in both the US and Japan, and general levels of cognitive functioning are nearly the same for both sexes in terms of mean scores of the cognitive measures. As to the differences in correlational patterns between the two countries, in Japan, however, more correlations are found to be significantly higher among boys than among girls. In the US, on the other hand, the number of significant correlations are the same for both sex groups. (Kashiwagi and Azuma, 1981) (see Table 9).

Table 9
Number of Correlations Found To Be Significant between Maternal Variable and Child's Cognitive Measures in Boys and Girls in Japan and US

Sex	Country	
	Japan	US
Boys	36	37
Girls	22	36

Source. K. Kashiwagi and H. Azuma, 1981.

The above data may suggest that Japanese boys are subjected more intensively to the treatment provided by their mothers to facilitate their cognitive skills than girls. Boys tend to be provided with more educational stimulations, opportunities and training that are of advantage to their later cognitive development than girls. Such differences between sexes

in socialisation processes are likely to be more predominant in Japan than in America.

Finally, comment is made of the social values or norms underlying the socialisation processes of sex role, either explicitly or implicitly, among the Japanese people (Kikuchi and Gordon, 1970). Kikuchi and Gordon present extensive cross-cultural data on value systems mainly in adolescents. Concerning interpersonal values, both male and female Japanese students significantly put more emphasis upon 'conformity' both at high school and college levels. 'Independence', almost an opposite value, is significantly more highly valued by American students of both age levels and sexes than their Japanese counterparts. Furthermore, Japanese students place higher value on 'orderliness' and 'goal orientation' among personal values than American students. This suggests their inclination towards a well-organised routine life, systematic approaches to relatively well-defined goals, and their resistance to change and diversity.

These findings seem to be closely in agreement with anthropological observations and anecdotal writings on Japanese national character. The characteristics of personal and interpersonal values of the Japanese have to be considered in order to understand sex-role socialisation in Japan. Social norms on sex role exist in Japan although they are not necessarily explicit and most are rather vague and implicit. The pressure to conform to the norms is more severely and pervasively put upon members of Japanese society than in Western cultures. Sex-differentiated training frequently employed by Japanese parents and even by school teachers is one of the reflections of that strong socio-cultural climate. Under the circumstances, discrepancies between one's own concept of sex role and the social norms of sex role are problems of importance for adolescents' self-identity, and they often provide critically serious conflicts for female adolescents.

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